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homemakers' chat

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U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, April 3, 1942

SUBJECT: "EASTER DINNER PLANS." Information from home economists of the U.S.
Department of Agriculture.

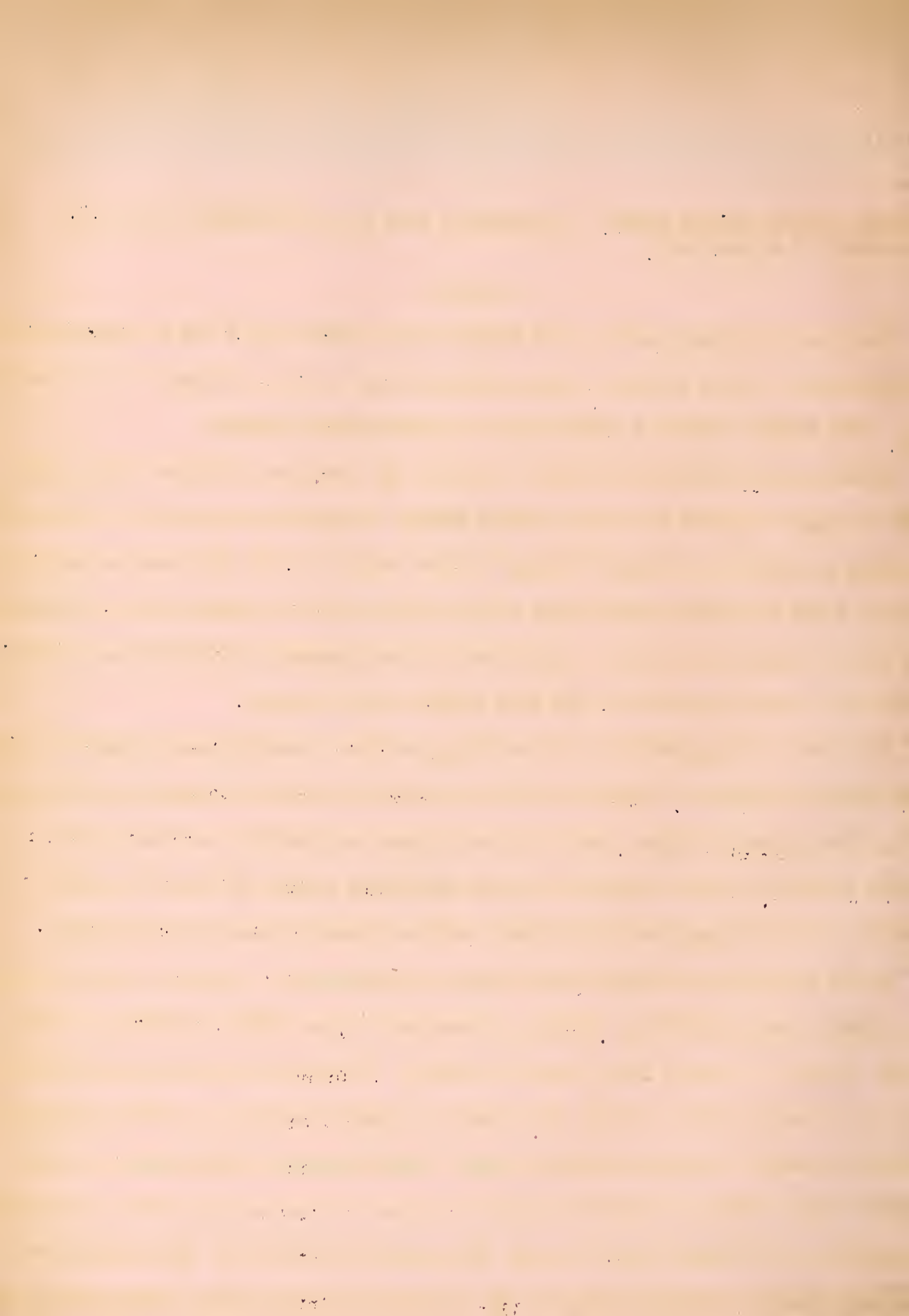
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Old-time housewives used to call Friday "go-to-market day." And in many American homes Friday is still the day to plan meals and lay in food--at least for the weekend. This Friday there's a special meal to plan--Easter dinner.

Other years--other Easters before this you may have been a little lavish about food for Easter dinner. On such a special Sunday of the year you may have felt like "letting yourself go on fancy fixings," as the saying is. But this year no patriotic citizen feels like being extravagant about buying food for anything else. Of Course, you want to serve your family a dinner that looks especially attractive and tastes extra good, but you want it to fit your budget just the same.

Here are a few suggestions that may help you plan a moderate-cost dinner in the true Easter tradition. Easter is the day you want your meal to suggest spring and young fresh growing things. That's why soft greens and yellows are such popular Easter colors. No need to remind you that egg dishes always fit into the Easter picture, and that young meats like lamb, veal and young chicken are favorites.

Let's see how you can work these Easter traditions into your menu without being too hard on your pocketbook. Maybe you have been in the habit of serving a crown roast of lamb or a roast leg of lamb for Easter. Or maybe you have had veal--one of the more expensive cuts of veal. This year you might substitute a stuffed shoulder of lamb or veal, or a roast stuffed breast. Stuffed breast of lamb framed on the platter with a circle of stuffed onions is a treat for any meal and looks especially attractive on the Easter dinner table. If you use mint leaves in the stuffing for the lamb breast or shoulder, they'll add not only mint flavor but a little touch of Easter green.



Another possibility is fried chicken, or chicken broiled with direct heat in the broiling pan. This spring the United States has a record supply of broilers or fryers for sale. They're one of the good buys right now.

What to serve with these young meats? Well, of course, boiled new potatoes served with chopped parsley are in the spring tradition. But if new potatoes are hard to get at your market, or a little too high for your pocketbook, you might plan on using fluffy boiled rice instead.

The vegetable for Easter dinner? How about savory spring greens? Young tender dandelions from your yard, perhaps, or wild greens just coming up in the fields, or greens from your garden or your market. Maybe you never thought of combining two or more kinds of greens--such as beet and turnip tops, or field cress and spinach, or corn salad and mustard greens--to give a blend of mild and pungent flavor. Just that little trick of cooking two or three kinds of greens together makes the dish something special. Cook the greens quickly in an uncovered kettle in a small quantity of salted boiling water. As soon as the greens are tender, drain and chop them. You can season them with a little crisp cooked bacon broken in small pieces, and a little hot bacon fat poured over the top. Or you can cook a little chopped onion in butter a few minutes, and then mix the butter and onion with the greens. Some people like a little lemon juice on greens along with salt and pepper. You can decorate the dish with slices of hard-cooked eggs.

So far the Easter menu goes like this: Stuffed roast of lamb or veal, or fried or broiled chicken; boiled new potatoes or boiled rice; and savory spring greens.

Now here's an idea for a special dish to serve along with the meat--spiced apricots or peaches. You can use the dried fruit if you wish. Spice with a little cinnamon and perhaps a little bit of clove.

Now about dessert for Easter. This year you'll want to choose a dessert that doesn't call for too much sugar. An egg dessert with "that dainty Easter look" would be a good choice. How about a gelatin and egg dessert that you can fix on Saturday

and have all ready to serve on Sunday? Snow pudding with custard sauce is an old favorite. Some people call it lemon sponge with custard sauce. The snowy white pudding you make with gelatin, egg white, lemon juice, and only enough sugar to sweeten. The yellow sauce for the pudding is soft custard made with the yolks of the eggs and milk. Three eggs make enough snow pudding and sauce to serve 6 people generously.

Once more now here's the whole Easter dinner: Roast stuffed lamb or veal, or fried or broiled chicken; boiled rice or boiled new potatoes; savory spring greens; spiced apricots or peaches; and snow pudding with custard sauce.

And here are best wishes for a happy Easter.

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